

The Story of Spelman Seminary

A School for Girls, Atlanta, Ga.

Founded 1881, by Miss Packard and Miss Giles

IT is early in 1881, sixteen years from slavery. Mothers, with yearning hearts, are going out under the stars night after night, to pray that something better than they have known may come to their daughters. The daughters, with confused



MISS HARRIET E. GILES
President from 1891

MISS SOPHIA B. PACKARD
President, 1881-1891

hopes and expectations of what the new freedom is to bring, are longing to "get an education," a great undefined good of which they understand little.

"Father" Frank Quarles, the aged Negro pastor of the Friendship Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga., is kneeling daily with burdened soul, entreating the Lord to send help for the girls in the red hills and river bottoms of Georgia.

Two Boston women, Miss Sophia B. Packard and Miss Harriet E. Giles, are not disobedient to a heavenly vision, — a vision of need in the South. They come to Atlanta, they call "Father" Quarles from his prayers to ask his help in opening a school for Negro women and girls.

The First Day of School

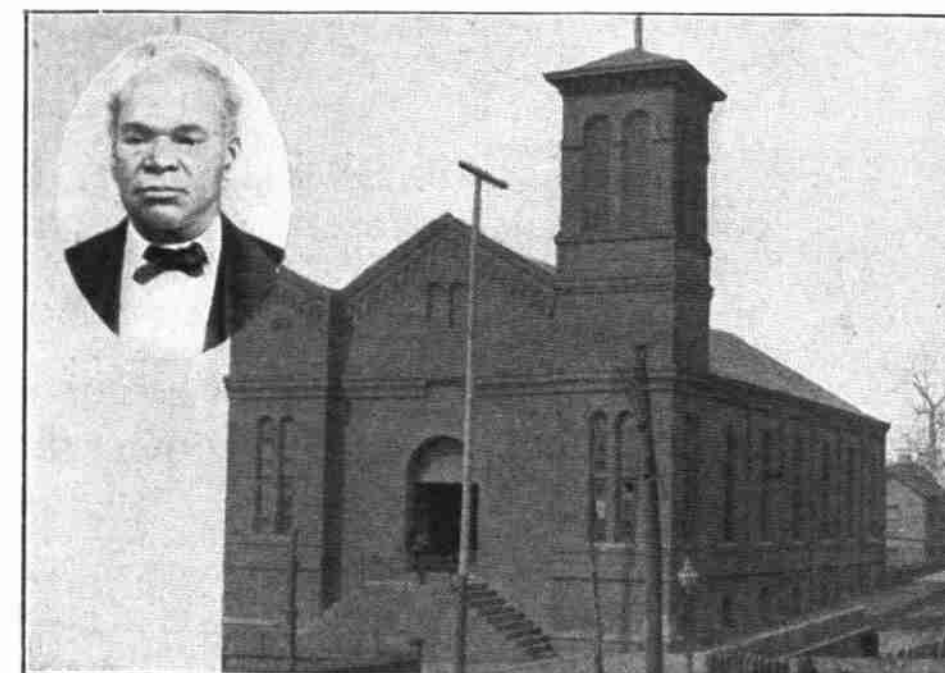
There comes a spring morning, April 11, 1881, when Miss Packard and Miss Giles — their only school equipment being their Bibles, their notebooks and their pencils — greet eleven girls, in a dark, damp school-room, the basement vestry of "Father" Quarles's church.

The room soon filled, — overflowed, — so that another

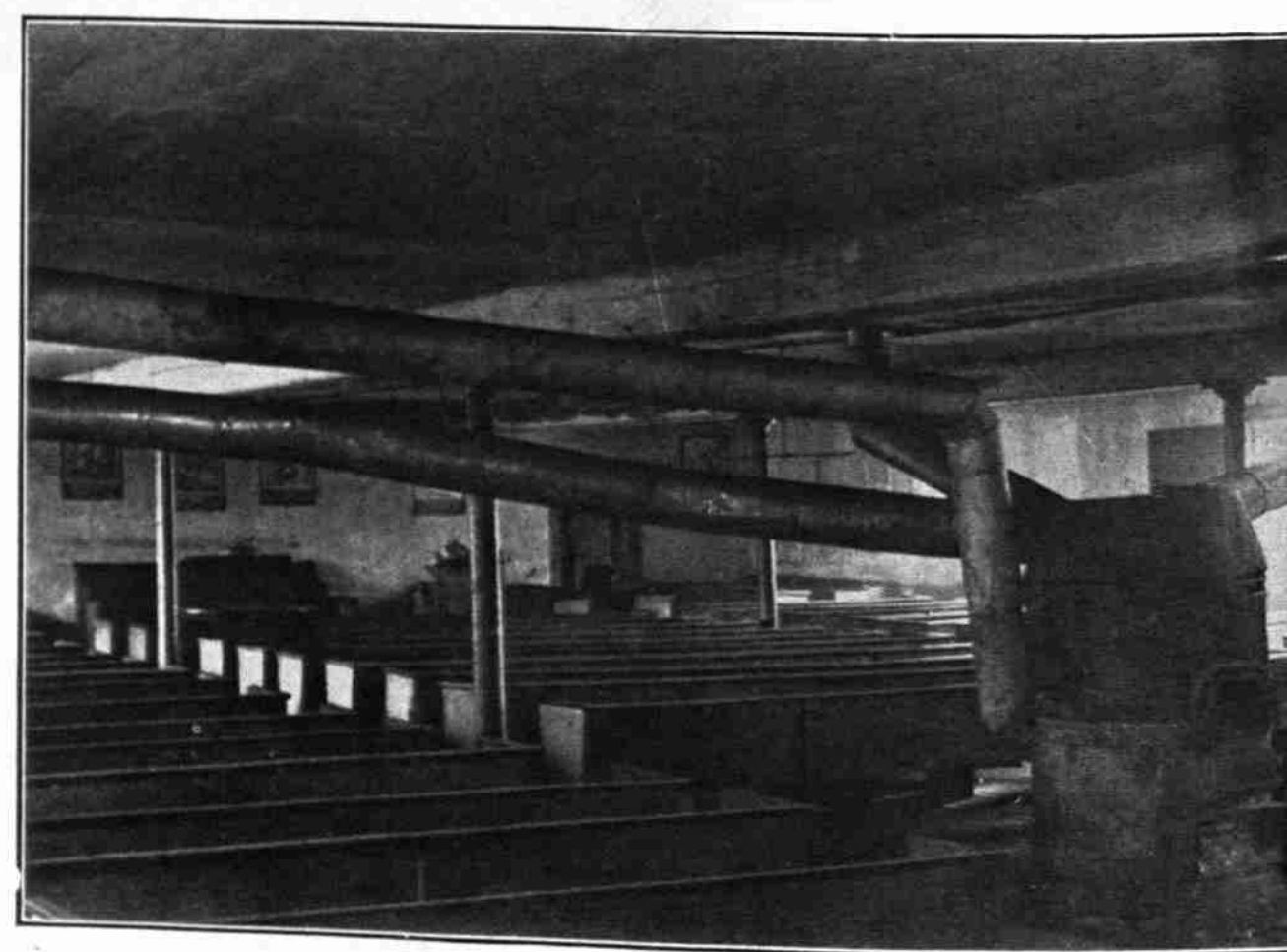
teacher, who came a few months later,

used the empty coal-bin for a recitation room. Young girls and "settled women" crowded in, hand in hand. When the school re-opened in October, 1881, about one hundred and seventy-five women were enrolled, one third of whom were from twenty-five to fifty years of age.

Boys said as they passed the door, "Just look at them old women sitting in school." But it was their first chance and their only one, and they were in earnest. One said, "Folks said I was going crazy about the school. Spect I was. 'Twas like folks got religion. They want others to have it. When they said I'd die by the time I'd graduate, I said I'd carry it to



"FATHER" FRANK QUARLES, AND FRIENDSHIP
BAPTIST CHURCH



BASEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH